DEQ
Montana Department
of Environmental Quality

**May 12, 2016**



Interested Party List

RE: Draft Checklist EA for Block Mountain Slate and Stone, Inc. for an Operating Permit

Dear Reader:

Enclosed for your review and comment is the Draft Checklist Environmental Assessment (CEA) for an operating permit requested by Block Mountain Slate and Stone, Inc., (BMSS) located at PO Box 216, Plains, MT 59859. BMSS filed an application for an Operating Permit on June 18, 2015, from the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Hard Rock Mining Bureau in Helena. The application was revised several times, the latest revision received on February 3, 2016.

The application for an operating permit includes seven sites. Three of the sites would fall under the general quarry permit, which covers sites that would not disturb more than five acres at any one time. A programmatic environmental assessment was issued for those sites. The application for an operating permit contains four sites (Henry Creek 1, Kunzer, DNRC and Banana Stone) that require an environmental assessment as more than five acres would be disturbed at any one time.

| Site Name | Location | Distance from nearest Community | Proposed Permit Boundary (acres) | Proposed 5-Year Disturbance | Proposed 20-Year Disturbance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Henry Creek 1 | T19N, R25W, Section 6 | 3 miles SE of Plains | 43.7 acres | 9.3 acres | 15 acres |
| Henry Creek 2 | T20N, R25W, Section 31 | 3 miles SE of Plains | 18.3 acres | 4.5 acres | 7 acres |
| Kuester | T20N, R27W, Section 24 | 7 miles W of Plains | 14.5 acres | 3 acres | 5 acres |
| Kunzer | T20N, R26W, Section 7 | 5 miles NW of Plains | 46.4 acres | 8.5 acres | 10.3 acres |
| DNRC | T20 N, | 3 miles SE | 54.1 acres | 7.7 acres | 13.5 acres |

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| | R25W Section 34 | of Plains | | | |
| Bald Howard | T19N, R25W, Section 28 | 0.5 miles SE of Paradise | 12.2 acres | 3 acres | 6 acres |
| Banana Stone | T20N, R26W, Section 12 | 5 miles E of Plains | 312 acres | 16 acres | 42.2 acres |

The rock to be removed is used for a variety of purposes and is shipped to most of the western US and Canada. BMSS is proposing a 20-year mine life. Within the permitted acres less than 100 acres would be disturbed over the life of the permit. Reclamation would be completed as concurrently with rock product activities as possible. Of the seven sites, Henry Creek 1, Kunzer, DNRC, and the Banana Stone site would exceed five acres disturbed and not reclaimed at any one time.

Access to all sites would be by existing roads. The access roads would remain for future use. All of the sites have been previously quarried. Some sites have been logged in the past and have had limited livestock grazing. The sites provide recreational opportunities for the landowners.

The rock product would consist of various rock types and mineralogies. The rock may be found near the surface, such as talus, or in-place such as bedded metasediments, sandstones, schist, shale, limestone, basalt, rhyolite, marble, etc. The rock could be covered by overburden, exposed as outcrops, or found as scattered rock lying on the surface. The rock to be mined is part of the Ravalli Group and Pritchard Formation of the Belt Supergroup.

Rock would be removed by hand picking, drilling and blasting followed by excavation and removal, ripping by a dozer, or excavator, followed by removal or drilling and splitting with a hydraulic press followed by removal. Some oversize rock would be sold as riprap. Rock would be sorted and stockpiled on site. Some splitting, breaking, crushing, and sawing of rock would be done for landscaping uses or for producing aggregates. Heavy equipment would be used, such as loaders, excavators, and dozers. The rock would be placed on pallets, in bins, or in trucks for shipment.

Hours of operation would be from 6 am to 4 pm. Occasionally, the operator may have to run two shifts to meet contract time frames.

Mining has occurred at the sites in recent years. BMSS cannot stay under five acres of disturbance at any one time at four of the sites as required for a Small Miner Exclusion Statement (SMES) and therefore must apply for an operating permit. The operating permit would allow the quarries to continue to be worked, with total disturbance, including what has already been disturbed, of about 52 acres over the next five years and up to 99 acres over the twenty year life of the quarries

The processing plant would consist of screening and crushing equipment. There would be an area set aside for screening and processing rock, a turn-around for trucks, soil and growth medium stockpiles, and product stockpiles. Water for dust control would be brought in from off-site.

On approval of this amendment a reclamation bond would need to be posted that would cover all disturbances.

As noted above the proposed operation has been reviewed for compliance under a Supplemental Programmatic Environmental Assessment (SPEA) for a General Quarry Operating Permit published by the DEQ in February 2004. DEQ has determined that some of the sites do not meet the requirements listed in the SPEA since there would be more than five acres unreclaimed at any one time. An operating permit may be issued once the environmental analysis is performed, and a reclamation bond has been posted to ensure reclamation after completion of the proposed activities. If BMSS develops additional lease agreements on other sites in the future, they would have to apply for an amendment or revision to the operating permit.

BMSS must obtain an operating permit as some of the sites cannot stay under the five acre disturbed and unreclaimed limit required under the Small Miner Exclusion Statement. The operating plan calls for reclamation of all surface disturbances with a post-mining land use consistent with past uses.

The Draft CEA addresses issues and concerns raised during public involvement and from agency scoping. The agencies have decided to approve the permit as proposed as the preliminary preferred alternative. This is not a final decision. This conclusion may change based on comments received from the public on this Draft CEA, new information, or new analysis that may be needed in preparing the Final CEA

Copies of the Draft CEA can be obtained by writing DEQ, Hard Rock Mining Bureau, P.O. Box 200901, Helena, MT 59620, c/o Herb Rolfes, or calling (406) 444-3841; or sending email addressed to hrolfes@mt.gov. The Draft CEA will also be posted on the DEQ web page: www.deq.mt.gov. Public comments concerning the adequacy and accuracy of the Draft CEA will be accepted until June 10, 2016.

Since the Final EA may only contain public comments and responses, and a list of changes to the Draft CEA, please keep this Draft CEA for future reference.

Warren D. McCullough 5/12/16

Warren D. McCullough, Chief
Hard Rock Mining Bureau

Date

EXPANDED CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

COMPANY NAME: Block Mountain Slate & Stone, Inc.
LOCATION: See table below
PROPERTY OWNERSHIP: [ ] Federal [X] State [X] Private

PROJECT: See table below
COUNTY: Sanders
OPERATING PERMIT No. 00185

TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION: On June 18, 2015 Block Mountain Slate & Stone, Inc (BMSS) submitted an application to the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) for an operating permit that would include seven sites. Three of the sites would fall under the general quarry permit, which covers sites that would not disturb more than five acres at any one time. A programmatic environmental assessment was issued for those sites. The application for an operating permit contains four sites (Henry Creek 1, Kunzer, DNRC and Banana Stone) that require an environment assessment as more than five acres would be disturbed at any one time.

| Site Name | Location | Distance from nearest Community | Proposed Permit Boundary (acres) | Proposed 5-Year Disturbance | Proposed 20-Year Disturbance |
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| Henry Creek 1 | T19N, R25W, Section 6 | 3 miles SE of Plains | 43.7 acres | 9.3 acres | 15 acres |
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| Kuester | T20N, R27W, Section 24 | 7 miles W of Plains | 14.5 acres | 3 acres | 5 acres |
| Kunzer | T20N, R26W, Section 7 | 5 miles NW of Plains | 46.4 acres | 8.5 acres | 10.3 acres |
| DNRC | T20 N, R25W Section 34 | 3 miles SE of Plains | 54.1 acres | 7.7 acres | 13.5 acres |
| Bald Howard | T19N, R25W, Section 28 | 0.5 miles SE of Paradise | 12.2 acres | 3 acres | 6 acres |
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The rock to be removed is used for a variety of purposes and is shipped to most of the western US and Canada. BMSS is proposing a 20-year mine life. Within the permitted acres less than 100 acres would be disturbed over the life of the permit. Reclamation would be completed as concurrently with rock product activities as possible. Of the seven sites, Henry Creek 1, Kunzer, DNRC, and the Banana Stone site would exceed five acres disturbed

and not reclaimed at any one time.

Access to all sites would be by existing roads. The access roads would remain for future use. All of the sites have been previously quarried. Some sites have been logged in the past and have had limited livestock grazing. The sites provide recreational opportunities for the landowners.

The rock product would consist of various rock types and mineralogies. The rock may be found near the surface, such as talus, or in-place such as bedded metasediments, sandstones, schist, shale, limestone, basalt, rhyolite, marble, etc. The rock could be covered by overburden, exposed as outcrops, or found as scattered rock lying on the surface. The rock to be mined is part of the Ravalli Group and Pritchard Formation of the Belt Supergroup.

Rock would be removed by hand picking, drilling and blasting followed by excavation and removal, ripping by a dozer, or excavator, followed by removal or drilling and splitting with a hydraulic press followed by removal. Some oversize rock would be sold as riprap. Rock would be sorted and stockpiled on site. Some splitting, breaking, crushing, and sawing of rock would be done for landscaping uses or for producing aggregates. Heavy equipment would be used, such as loaders, excavators, and dozers. The rock would be placed on pallets, in bins, or in trucks for shipment.

Hours of operation would be from 6 am to 4 pm. Occasionally, the operator may have to run two shifts to meet contract time frames.

DEQ must review the application, evaluate the potential impacts, and decide if it complies with the Montana Metal Mine Reclamation Act (MMRA) requirements, and the Administrative Rules of Montana 17.24.119.

PROPOSED ACTION: Mining has occurred at the sites in recent years. BMSS cannot stay under five acres of disturbance at any one time at four of the sites as required for a Small Miner Exclusion Statement (SMES) and therefore must apply for an operating permit. The operating permit would allow the quarries to continue to be worked, with total disturbance, including what has already been disturbed, of about 52 acres over the next five years and up to 99 acres over the twenty year life of the quarries

Material from the quarries would be used for a variety of purposes and is being shipped to western US and Canada. The processing plant would consist of screening and crushing equipment. There would be an area set aside for screening and processing rock, a turn-around for trucks, soil and growth medium stockpiles, and product stockpiles. Water for dust control would be brought in from off-site.

On approval of this amendment a reclamation bond would need to be posted that would cover all disturbances.

## CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Environmental Assessment (EA) Legend:
N = Not present or No Impact will occur.
Y = Impacts may occur (explain under Potential Impacts).
NA = Not Applicable

| IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT |
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| IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT | |
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| RESOURCE | [Y/N] POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES |
| 1. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE: Are soils present which are fragile, erosive, susceptible to compaction, or unstable? Are there unusual or unstable geologic features? Are there special reclamation considerations? | [N] Henry Creek 1: The quarry site is largely composed of rock outcrops and rangeland with shallow soils. Shallow gravelly loam soils occur adjacent to the outcrop areas.<br><br>Kunzer: The rock to be mined is glaciated Belt Super Group.<br><br>DNRC: The rock is a combination of Precambrian Pritchard Formation argillites and Ravalli and Burke Formation quartzite.<br><br>Banana Stone: The rock type consists of hard and soft sedimentary layers and coarse sediments and talus slopes. The quarry site is a rocky bluff with little surface soil. Along the edges of the quarry there are lenses of sandy loam soil.<br><br>All sites: The rock product would consist of various rock types and mineralogies. The rock may be found near the surface, such as talus, or in-place such as bedded metasediments, sandstones, schist, shale, limestone, basalt, rhyolite, marble, etc. The rock could be covered by overburden, exposed as outcrops, or found as scattered rock lying on the surface. The rock to be mined is part of the Ravalli Group and Pritchard Formation of the Belt Supergroup.<br><br>Soil would be stockpiled and set aside for reclamation. The stockpiles would be seeded as soon as possible to limit weed infestation.<br><br>Existing access roads would remain. Most of the quarry development roads would be recontoured and reclaimed upon completion of mining. Various roads that provide access to quarry areas would also remain for postmine uses.<br><br>Materials that do not meet the specifications for various rock products would be left at the site and used in the reclamation process at closure. Reclamation would consist primarily of smoothing disrupted ground surfaces, replacing any soil that had been removed and stockpiled, seeding sites where rock has been removed, clearing rock from roads and trails that remain after quarrying, and grading excessive ruts on roads or fields that may have been caused by equipment.<br><br>Quarries would be reclaimed by scaling back highwalls, if necessary for stability and safety. Rock highwalls would be left as rock faces |

| IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT | |
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| | blending in with the surrounding topography. The quarry floor would be graded, ripped if necessary, and covered with soil material if available, and revegetated. All cut slopes and/or highwalls in unconsolidated materials would be graded and or sloped to conform to the surrounding or adjacent topography. Overburden and waste rock would be graded to conform to the natural topography, graded against the quarry highwall or left as a mound or slope. Coarse rock would not be revegetated but would remain as a rubble or scree feature. Overburden that could support vegetation, or rock that could be covered with salvaged soil, would be revegetated. |
| 2. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION: Are important surface or groundwater resources present? Is there potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality? | [N] Henry Creek 1: There are no water wells within 1,000 feet of the quarry site. There is no evidence of standing water within the site or wetlands. Quarrying would excavate into the hillside.<br><br>Kunzer: There is no surface water in the proposed site. Quarrying would extend into the hillside and would not encroach on the water table.<br><br>DNRC: There is no surface water within the site. Quarrying would not extend into the groundwater table.<br><br>Banana Stone: There are no water wells within 1,000 feet of the quarry site. There is no evidence of standing water within the site or wetlands. The quarry is approximately 150 feet above the water table.<br><br>All sites: BMSS would not quarry below the water table at any of the proposed sites. There are no surface waters within 100 feet of any quarry site. For those sites that are near surface water, BMSS would implement BMPs and Streamside Management Zone requirements. All stormwater would be contained on site. |
| 3. AIR QUALITY: Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I airshed)? | [N] Dust control would consist of spraying water during mining, screening, and hauling operations.<br><br>Mobile crushers would have a separate air quality permit. |
| 4. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be significantly impacted? Are any rare plants or cover types present? | [N] Henry Creek 1: The area adjacent to the proposed quarry site is a mixed Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine dry forest type. The quarry site itself contains native grasses and shrubs, along with noxious weeds. The noxious weeds are mullein, knapweed, thistle, common tansy, and Dalmatian toadflax. |

| IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT | |
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| | Kunzer: There are no known species of concern in the general area of this site.<br>DNRC: There are no known species of concern in the general area of this site.<br><br>Banana Stone: The site is composed of a talus slope that is bare of vegetation. The area around the talus slope contains Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine. Shrub species include snowberry and ninebark. Grasses include pinegrass and rough fescue. Noxious weeds in the area include thistle, spotted knapweed, and mullein. There are no known species of concern for this site.<br><br>All sites: Most of the quarries have been logged or managed for rock products in the past. The major forest types are Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine, lodgepole pine, western larch, and Engelmann spruce. Noxious weeds are present at all sites. BMSS has an approved weed management plan from Sanders County.<br><br>An inquiry of the Montana Natural Heritage Program revealed a number of species of concern in the general area.<br><br>Henry Creek 1 and 2: There is one species of concern in the general area; the slender hareleaf.<br><br>Kuester site: There is one species of concern in the general area; the clustered lady's-slipper.<br><br>Bald Howard site: There are no known species of concern in the general area of this site. |
| 5. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS: Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds, or fish? | [N] Rock dominated habitats are abundant in the areas where rock is being proposed to be removed. BMSS would mitigate impacts during operations by minimizing road building, retaining large trees, logs, and snags, maintaining some exposed surface rock after reclamation as rocky habitat, and limiting total disturbed areas by implementing concurrent reclamation of areas no longer needed.<br><br>The sites are outside of the ungulate winter ranges as mapped by the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks. Rock outcrops and talus slopes are widely distributed around the sites. Therefore, impacts to wildlife that use outcrops and talus slopes within the permit areas would be limited.<br><br>BMSS queried the Montana Natural Heritage Program's sensitive wildlife species database to locate federally endangered and |

| IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT | |
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| | threatened wildlife species and globally critically imperiled and globally imperiled wildlife species on quarry lands. If sensitive species are found to be present BMSS would discuss potential mitigation plans with the DEQ.<br><br>Currently federally listed animal species within the township and range of the proposed quarry sites include grizzly bear, Canada lynx, gray wolf, and bull trout. None of the federally listed wildlife species are known to exist at any of the proposed quarry sites except the gray wolf. Three wolves were observed to be passing through Henry Creek 1 site in late fall of 2009. The wolves were later killed after attacking livestock in the area. Other wolves may occasionally pass through the area in the future but the quarry site would not be considered wolf habitat. Although grizzly bears and Canada lynx may use areas with rock features, none of these federally listed species of concern are known to depend on specific rock habitats or are users of this habitat type. None of the sites would impact bull trout.<br><br>Henry Creek 1: There is intermittent use during the year by deer, elk, black bear, mountain lion, and moose. The quarry site does not contain any unique habitat features. There are no known species of concern listed for the site.<br><br>Kunzer: There is one special status species and eight species of concern.in the region. The one species of special status is the bald eagle. The species of concern are the wolverine, fisher, great blue heron, Lewis's woodpecker, western toad, westslope cutthroat trout, lake trout, bull trout, and the hooded merganser. These species would not, or are not likely to find the quarry site suitable habitat.<br><br>The bald eagle is primarily a species of riparian and lacustrine habitats. Important year-round habitat includes wetlands, major water bodies, spring spawning streams, ungulate winter ranges and open water areas. Wintering habitat may include upland sites. Nesting sites are generally located within larger forested areas near large lakes and rivers where nests are usually built in the tallest, oldest, large diameter trees. Nesting site selection is dependent upon maximum local food availability and minimum disturbance from human activity. The quarry site is close enough to the Clark Fork River that eagles could perch nearby. Quarry activity would discourage use by eagles in the area from nesting.<br><br>DNRC: Based on the DNRC EA the flammulated owl and pileated woodpecker have been identified as sensitive species in the area. |

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| | DNRC mitigations include retention of ponderosa pine and western larch within the immediate area. The EA notes that rock removal is not expected to have an adverse impact on these species. If a species of concern is found on the quarry site, BMSS would meet with DEQ to mitigate impacts to the species.<br><br>Banana Stone: There is one special status species and eight species of special concern in the region. The species of special status is the bald eagle. The bald eagle has not been found within the proposed quarry. The species of special concern are the wolverine, fisher, great blue heron, Lewis's woodpecker, western toad, westslope cutthroat trout, bull trout, lake trout, and hooded merganser. These species are not likely to be found at the quarry site.<br><br>Henry Creek 2: There are six species of concern listed for the region. They are the wolverine, fisher, black-backed woodpecker, northern alligator lizard, and westslope cutthroat trout and the hooded merganser. The potential species The site does not provide or is not likely to provide suitable habitat for these species.<br><br>Kuester site: There is one special status species and 11 species of concern for the region. The one species of special status is the bald eagle. The species of concern are the wolverine, fisher, northern goshawk, golden eagle, bald eagle, great blue heron, flammulated owl, pacific wren, western toad, westslope cutthroat trout, bull trout, lake trout, and boreal owl. These species would not or are not likely to find the quarry site suitable habitat. The flammulated owl may use the quarry area for foraging but would not nest in the area. Western toads may occasionally use the quarry area but it would not be the preferred habitat.<br><br>Bald Howard site: There is one special status species and eight species of concern in the region. The one species of special status is the bald eagle. The bald eagle has not been sighted within the quarry site. The species of concern are the wolverine, fisher, black-backed woodpecker, northern alligator lizard and westslope cutthroat trout. These species would not, or are not likely to find the quarry site suitable habitat except for the northern alligator lizard that might be found at the quarry site in talus deposits. If a species of concern is found on the quarry site, BMSS would meet with DEQ to mitigate impacts to the species.<br><br>There is little specific information on habitat associations for the northern alligator lizard in Montana. Several observations have been made on south-facing slopes in fine to course talus, sometimes in the |

| IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT | |
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| | open, but often with some canopy cover of Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine, a variety of shrubby species, and a litter layer of dried leaves and conifer needles.<br><br>From other locations within the species' range, the northern alligator lizard occurs in areas more cool and humid than most lizards tolerate, but it also appears to require some sunny clearings. It is found in coniferous forest, often in grassy grown-over areas at the margins of woodlands, in clearcuts, sometimes near streams or in sagebrush habitats, along coasts sometimes far from trees or major cover, often associated with rock outcrops and talus in some regions, and frequenting areas around abandoned buildings. The northern alligator lizard could be found at the proposed quarry sites located in talus deposits. |
| 6. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are any federally listed threatened or endangered species or identified habitat present? Any wetlands? Species of special concern? | [N] The proposed sites would not cause impacts to any known threatened, endangered, or sensitive species or habitats. A review by the Montana Natural Heritage Program revealed species of concern that exist in the general area as noted above.<br><br>The reclaimed quarries would have the potential to provide similar habitat as what currently exists. The habitat varies in the area from talus slopes and conifer forested rubble to open spaces and grassland. |
| 7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological, or paleontological resources present? | [N] A records search by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) indicated that there are no known cultural areas of concern in the proposed permit area.<br><br>As noted in the application, the operator would provide protection for archaeological and historical sites if they are discovered and contact the SHPO and DEQ.<br><br>A cultural report was submitted by the applicant to SHPO for the site. No historic or archaeological sites were discovered in the proposed permit area. |
| 8. AESTHETICS: Is the project on a prominent topographic feature? Will it be visible from populated or scenic areas? Will there be excessive noise or light? | [N] The sites have been quarried in the past under a SMES, and are in remote areas. Some of the sites have been logged in the past and have had limited livestock grazing. Disturbed areas would be regraded and seeded.<br><br>During the working life of the mine those areas that are no longer needed for quarry operations would be graded, soiled, and seeded.<br><br>Any remaining product stockpiles would be left for subsequent use by |

| IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT | |
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| | the landowner.<br><br>Work at the quarry and hauling from the site would occur during daylight hours, normally from 6 am to 4 pm. Occasionally, the operator may have to run two shifts to meet contract time frames.<br><br>The operation is seasonal in that work would take place from March through mid-December. Not all sites would be worked during this time, some for only a few months of the year and some for most of the work season.<br><br>The use of haul trucks is limited to one 20-ton truck; otherwise pickups trucks would be used.<br><br>The project would employ between 11 and 19 people.<br><br>Noise would be generated as material is removed, sized, and loaded into haul trucks. |
| 9. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR, OR ENERGY: Will the project use resources that are limited in the area? Are there other activities nearby that will affect the project? | [N] Water would need to be brought to the site for dust control. Plum Creek has similar quarry operations in the area. |
| 10. IMPACTS ON OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are there other activities nearby that will affect the project? | [N] There are no other activities in the area that would affect this project. |

| IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION | |
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| 11. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY: Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area? | [N] The project would use existing roads. Some spur roads would be constructed and may remain for postmine use by the land owners.<br><br>BMSS provides transportation for the employees to reduce the number of vehicles on the road.<br><br>No additional impacts from what those that currently exist are |

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| | expected with approval of this operating permit. |
| 12. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities? | [N] No changes are expected. |
| 13. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT: Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number. | [N] The current number of employees ranges from 11 to 19 people, which is not expected to increase with approval of this amendment. |
| 14. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue? | [N] The project would allow employment for a small number of people to continue. This amendment would maintain or add to tax revenue. |
| 15. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES: Will substantial traffic be added to existing roads? Will other services (fire protection, police, schools, etc.) be needed? | [N] The Proposed Action would not impact government services. |
| 16. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect? | [Y] The DNRC site has a management plan in place. |
| 17. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES: Are wilderness or recreational areas nearby or accessed through this tract? Is there recreational potential within the tract? | [N] The Proposed Action would not impact any wilderness or recreational areas.<br><br>Henry Creek sites: The primary land use in the area is wildlife habitat, rangeland, and timber management. The proposed quarry sites are not well-suited for timber or grazing activities and recreational use is limited to hunting.<br><br>Kunzer: The primary land use is wildlife habitat, timber management, and a nearby homesite. The area of the quarry is not well suited for |

| IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION | |
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| | timber or grazing activities, and has been quarried in the past. The recreational potential is limited to hunting.<br><br>DNRC: The land is held by the State of Montana in trust. There are no expected impacts to access and quality of recreational and wilderness activities associated with the proposed quarry.<br><br>Banana Stone site: The proposed site has been used for timber harvesting for the last 60 years. Grazing has also occurred in the past, but not after 1993. People have removed rock from the lower talus slope for personal use, but not for commercial use. The area has open public access. |
| 18. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING: Will the project add to the population and require additional housing? | [N] The Proposed Action would not cause impacts to the density and distribution of population and housing. |
| 19. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES: Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible? | [N] Approval of the operating permit is not expected to cause impacts to social structures and mores. |
| 20. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY: Will the action cause a shift in some unique quality of the area? | [N] Approval of the operating permit is not expected to cause impacts to cultural uniqueness and diversity. |
| 21. PRIVATE PROPERTY IMPACTS: Are we regulating the use of private property under a regulatory statute adopted pursuant to the police power of the state? (Property management, grants of financial assistance, and the exercise of the power of eminent domain are not within this category.) If not, no further analysis is required. | [N] The Proposed Action would not impact private property use. |
| 22. PRIVATE PROPERTY IMPACTS: Does the proposed regulatory action restrict the use of | [N] The Proposed Action and Type and Purpose sections above identify the objectives of this environmental assessment. |

| IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION | |
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| the regulated person's private property? If not, no further analysis is required. | |
| 23. PRIVATE PROPERTY IMPACTS: Does the agency have legal discretion to impose or not impose the proposed restriction or discretion as to how the restriction will be imposed? If not, no further analysis is required. If so, the agency must determine if there are alternatives that would reduce, minimize or eliminate the restriction on the use of private property, and analyze such alternatives. | [Y] The Proposed Action and Type and Purpose sections above identify the objectives of this environmental assessment. See item 22 above. |
| 24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES: | [N] |

25. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED: NO-ACTION ALTERNATIVE (DENY THE APPLICANT'S PROPOSED ACTION): The No-Action Alternative would not allow implementation of the proposed operating permit. This would mean that existing quarries could not expand beyond the five acres of disturbance that is allowed under a SMES and that only three sites could be operated by the company.

26. APPROVE THE APPLICANT'S PROPOSED ACTION: Seven quarries would be approved. The Proposed Action would allow additional disturbance over the five acres disturbed and unreclaimed limit imposed by a SMES for four sites, Henry Creek 1, Kunzer, DNRC, and Banana Stone.

27. APPROVE THE AGENCY MODIFIED PLAN: No mitigations are being proposed.

28. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT: Legal notices of the receipt of an application for an operating permit were published in: Thompson Falls: *Sanders County Ledger*, Kalispell: *Daily Inter Lake*, and Missoula: *Missoulian*, for three successive weeks. No comments were received.

    A public news release will be issued on the results of this EA. A legal notice concerning the application and availability of this EA will be published, and a public comment period provided.

29. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION: The DNRC issued an expanded EA, for what is referred to as the DNRC site in the application to DEQ. In the DNRC EA the site is referred to as the Middle Henry site. The DNRC expanded EA was issued in August of 2008.

30. MAGNITUDE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS: There would be no significant environmental impacts associated with this proposal. As noted, there would be impacts to soil, vegetation, and wildlife on the disturbed acres. The sites, except the stockpile areas left for the use of the landowner, would be reclaimed at closure. Talus slopes would be regraded under the proposed action but not soiled and seeded to match pre-existing and existing talus slopes. Indirect impacts, such as truck traffic would continue.

31. CUMULATIVE EFFECTS: There are no other proposals in the area that would add to the cumulative effects from this proposal. Plum Creek has an existing site next to the Banana Stone site.

**RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:** The agencies have concluded that impacts from the proposed action would be minimal.

[ ] EIS [ ] More Detailed EA [X] No Further Analysis.

The DEQ has selected the Proposed Action as the preferred alternative.

**EA Checklist Prepared By:**
Herb Rolfes, DEQ Operating Permits Section Supervisor

**This EA was reviewed by:**
Patrick Plantenberg, DEQ Reclamation Specialist
Warren McCullough, DEQ, Environmental Management Bureau, Chief

**Approved By:**

Warren D. McCullough 5/9/16

Signature Date
Warren D. McCullough, Chief, Hard Rock Mining Bureau, DEQ

OP\OP_Applications\Block Mountain Stone and Slate 00185\Draft EA HRPP